

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of this past April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month where Americans across the country worked to raise awareness of child abuse prevention and services available to victims.

Child abuse is a tragic, destructive, and a largely silent epidemic that affects millions of Americans--both children and adults.

And it is never more tragic than when it is sexual in nature. Unfortunately one in six children in our country experience this in their lifetime.

In fact, in my district, there was a young woman who was abused by a teacher she knew and respected over a decade ago. I am proud to say that she has not only recovered and is leading a happy life, but is also one of the officers in a group headquartered in Santa Ana called The Innocence Mission, which is working to help prevent abuse.

The Innocence Mission is putting forward a message of empowerment, one that tells parents they CAN prevent child sexual abuse. A message that speaks directly to children and adult survivors and says to them--they are not alone. Victims have the support of their communities, and have nothing to be ashamed of.

Far too often we read stories of child abuse in the headlines. It is heartbreaking and preventable, and that is why we must work to raise awareness not only just in April but year round.